

Week Ending Friday, October 12, 2007

### **The President's Radio Address**

*October 6, 2007*

Good morning. One important commitment of the Federal Government is to help America's poorest children get access to health care. Most of these children are covered by Medicaid, which will spend more than \$35 billion to help them this fiscal year. For children who do not qualify for Medicaid but whose families are struggling, we have the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP.

Washington is now in the midst of an important debate over the future of this vital program. I strongly support SCHIP. My administration has added more than 2 million children to SCHIP since 2001. And our 2008 budget increases SCHIP funding by 20 percent over 5 years.

Unfortunately, more than 500,000 poor children who are eligible for SCHIP coverage are not enrolled in the program. At the same time, many States are spending SCHIP funds on adults. In fact, based on their own projections for this fiscal year, Minnesota, Illinois, New Jersey, Michigan, Rhode Island, and New Mexico will spend more SCHIP money on adults than they do on children. And that is not the purpose of the program.

This week, congressional leaders sent me a deeply flawed bill that would move SCHIP even further from its original purpose. Here are some of the problems with Congress's plan. Under their plan, one out of every three children who moves onto Government coverage would drop private insurance. In other words, millions of children would move out of private health insurance and onto a Government program. Congress's plan would also transform a program for poor children into one that covers children in some households with incomes up to \$83,000. Congress's plan would raise taxes on working people. And Congress's plan does not even fully fund

all the new spending. If their plan becomes law, 5 years from now Congress would have to choose between throwing people off SCHIP or raising taxes a second time.

Congress's SCHIP plan is an incremental step toward their goal of Government-run health care for every American. Government-run health care would deprive Americans of the choice and competition that comes from the private market. It would cause huge increases in Government spending. It would result in rationing, inefficiency, and long waiting lines. It would replace the doctor-patient relationship with dependency on bureaucrats in Washington, DC. And it is the wrong direction for our country.

Congress knew that I would veto this bill, yet they sent it anyway. So on Wednesday, I vetoed the SCHIP bill. And I asked Members of Congress to come together and work with me on a responsible bill that I can sign, so we can keep this important program serving America's poor children.

When it comes to SCHIP, we should be guided by a clear principle: Put poor children first. I urge Republicans and Democrats in Congress to support a bill that moves adults off this children's program and covers children who do not qualify for Medicaid, but whose families are struggling. If putting poor children first takes a little more than the 20 percent increase I have proposed in my budget for SCHIP, I am willing to work with leaders in Congress to find the additional money.

Ultimately, our Nation's goal should be to move children who have no health insurance to private coverage, not to move children who already have private health insurance to Government coverage. By working together, Republicans and Democrats can strengthen SCHIP, ensure that it reaches the children who need it, and find ways to help more American families get the private health coverage they need.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on October 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to H.R. 976, the “Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007.” The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Statement on the Death of Representative Jo Ann Davis**

*October 6, 2007*

Laura and I are deeply saddened that Representative Jo Ann Davis lost her courageous battle with breast cancer today. Her determination to fight the disease is an inspiration to all of us.

Over the course of her four terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, she was an effective advocate for the people of her district and a strong supporter of our men and women in uniform. She was a fine example of a public servant who worked hard to cut Government waste to ensure the people’s money was used wisely. Her commonsense values will be missed on Capitol Hill.

Laura and I send our thoughts and prayers to her husband, Chuck, their two sons, and the rest of the Davis family during this difficult time.

### **Remarks at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland**

*October 7, 2007*

Thank you all. Thank you. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. David, thank you very much for your introduction. Nothing better than being introduced by an old fire chief. And I thank you for your service, Dave. It is such an honor to be here. I was telling Laura on the phone—she didn’t make it; I apologize, and so does she—but I said, I’m going down the hill—I was up at Camp David—I’m going down the hill to be with some remarkable people and their families and to honor those who served. I

said, I can’t wait to go and to—be in their midst because I hold the firefighters in such high regard. I have a deep respect in my soul for people who serve our communities.

As David mentioned, far too often we go to sites that have been devastated by natural disaster, for example. Every time, the firefighters are there—every time. It’s clear that the people here who wear the uniform have a different view of jurisdiction than a lot of our citizens. You know, from New York after 9/11 to New Orleans after Katrina, there were firefighters from around the country there to help. The bond between the firefighters is obviously unique; it is definitely a source of strength. And it’s a reminder that the work here is a calling, not a job.

I want to thank the foundation for working hard to ensure that the families of those who have died in—are well treated. I want to tell you today that the Hometown Heroes Act will be fully implemented. This program will be administrated the way it was intended to be administrated. That’s the least we can do as we honor the families of those who have died in the line of service.

I also am amazed at the compassion I see amongst those who wear the uniform for their comrades. Anyway, thanks for having me. I’m sorry it’s under these circumstances that we have to be together. I hope our presence can help heal your hearts just a little bit. And I’m looking forward to giving you a hug if you want a hug or smiling for a picture if you want to smile for a picture. But most of all, I’m looking forward to honoring your loved ones.

I want to thank Steny Hoyer for joining us. He is—he respects you like I respect you, and he can pay tribute about as eloquently as anybody I have heard. I appreciate Roscoe Bartlett—he’s the Congressman from this district—for joining us as well.

I want to thank the mayor of Emmitsburg, Mayor Hoover, for joining us. I appreciate Chief Cade. I want to thank my friend Hal Bruno, who is the chairman of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. I want to thank the members of the board of directors who are here. I appreciate you all coming.

You know, it takes a special kind of person to be a firefighter. It begins with a different sense of direction. When an area becomes